

Eye Care and Eye Health Newsletter

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Welcome to the Eye Health Team newsletter from the NHS England – South East (Kent, Surrey and Sussex) Regional Local Office Ophthalmic Contracting Team.

We wish all our contractors a Happy New Year! We aim to bring you information, contractual reminders and the latest national and regional news about NHS eye health throughout the year.

Last year was quite a year for changes, and 2019 is set for a few more with the introduction of electronic options for submitting GOS claims, electronic referrals and updated GOS contracts.

NHS England is currently in the process of sending out a contract variation to incorporate the national changes to the terms of your General Ophthalmic Mandatory

Services contract. In the case of you holding an older version of the contract, we are issuing new contracts rather than just a variation notice.

Thank you to all contractors who we have contacted so far and asked to sign the contract variation or new contracts.

We will be contacting all Additional Services (domiciliary) contractors later in the year to complete the contract update process.

Frequency of sight tests – a reminder

It is the responsibility of the contractor to ensure that all performers working under their GOS contract re-call patients at an appropriate interval. Contrary to what some people believe, the 2002 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (as reproduced in [Vouchers at a Glance](#)) does *not* entitle patients aged 70 and over, those with glaucoma, diabetes, OHT or conditions that are monitored under HES to have a routine sight test every year. Patients are 'entitled' to a sight test as often as is clinically necessary, and it is the optometrist who signs the GOS1 who should decide this. When deciding on an appropriate recall period, the question that should be asked is 'if this patient is not having any problems with their eyes, when do I feel they should have another sight test?' This is because patients should be advised to return earlier if they feel their sight has changed.

If the optometrist decides to recall a patient at an interval that is less than those specified in the MoU, the reason for this should be clearly noted on the record, and – when the patient returns for their sight test – an appropriate code should be entered onto the back of the GOS1 by the examining optometrist.

From our regular monitoring of patient records during post payment verification visits, it appears that some practitioners are misinterpreting the MOU; this is especially noticeable amongst contractors with multiple numbers of performers, and during the summer months when more locums are used.

To avoid non-payment of GOS claims, please ensure that the clinical reason for a sight test is always clearly recorded on patient records, and if it is less than the MoU, please ensure that the appropriate early sight test code is included on the GOS form before submission for payment.

The MoU does not entitle patients aged 70 and over, those with glaucoma, OHT or conditions that are monitored under HES or diabetic patients, to have a routine sight test every year.

Issue of patients being referred to hospital eye services when a visual field machine is not working.

One of our local hospitals recently noticed an increase in patients being referred, upon investigation it transpired that this was due to a visual field machine not working in a local practice. We urge all contractors to address any equipment issues as a matter of urgency. It is a contractual requirement that the contractor ensures that equipment is suitable and sufficient to meet the reasonable needs of their patients. Referring patients because equipment is not working is an unnecessary inconvenience and concern for the patient and additional strain on NHS resources.

NHS UK Website (formerly NHS Choices) – Your Profile

A profile for each new mandatory contract is set up on NHS UK website with the details provided by NHS England. You can check your profile by searching ‘opticians’ and entering your postcode at <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/>

Changes and updates to your profile can be made by registering for the profile editing service. If you wish to do this, please email the NHS UK website service desk nhswebsite.servicedesk@nhs.net with your name, job title, organisation name and telephone number, including the details of the profiles that you wish to edit.

Please note, any changes to your address, GOS hours or contact details will affect your contract and you will need to tell NHS England about these by [emailing us](#) prior to updating this website.

NHS 111 Referrals

NHS 111 call handlers sometimes receive enquiries from the public about GOS available in their area. We are currently working alongside 111 Directory of Service managers to provide them with the most up to date information on optical practices and domiciliary services within the community. It is therefore important that we know your up to date address, contract details and GOS hours.

Information Required Regarding Your General Ophthalmic Services (GOS) Additional (Domiciliary) Contract Area

Thank you to all domiciliary providers who recently responded to our email request of 14 December 2018 for information on the areas in which you provide services. The deadline for submitting this information to us is 11th January 2019, therefore if you have not done so already, please respond to our request as soon as possible. If you hold an Additional Services (domiciliary) contract with us, but did not receive our email, please [contact us](#) so we can include you on the NHS111 Directory of Services.

Primary Care Support Services (PCSE)

GOS 4 adult approvals, second pair, non-tolerance applications and pre-visit domiciliary notifications.

Please note the procedure changed from 5 November 2018 for GOS 4 adult approvals, second pair and non-tolerance applications and there is a new online form for pre-visit domiciliary notifications. New processes are as outlined on the useful contact list attached.

Coming Soon.....Electronic GOS submissions (eGOS)

PCSE has created easy-to-use online systems that will simplify and speed up the ophthalmic payments process by:

- Introducing two new electronic options for securely submitting GOS claims
- Launching an online service to track claims and view statements, helping to reconcile payments more easily.

More information is available here:

<https://pcse.england.nhs.uk/about/what-s-changing/ophthalmic-payments-changes/>

PCSE FAQs

Have you received the wrong payment? No payment? Missing your statement? Has a patient just told you they aren't eligible for the claim you submitted last week?

The answers to these and many other questions about the support services that PCSE provides for ophthalmic contractors can be found here:

<https://pcse.england.nhs.uk/help/ophthalmic-payments/ophthalmic-payments-online-enquiries-form/>

Are patients who live overseas entitled to an NHS sight test when in the UK?

NHS England has recently had some queries about this from local ophthalmic contractors. The ABDO website has a clear summary of the situation:

Overseas visitors should not be charged for GOS services

There is no nationality or residency requirement for someone to be eligible for GOS

“...the eligibility criteria for NHS sight testing service, set out in the Primary Ophthalmic Services Regulations 2008, include no nationality or residence requirements. Therefore if someone asks for an NHS funded sight test and they meet any of the criteria (e.g. they are under 16 years of age), then they are eligible for NHS funded GOS services regardless of their nationality.”

The full explanation is clear and short and can be found at

<https://www.abdo.org.uk/news/guidance-on-overseas-visitor-charging-regulations-and-eye-care-services/>

At the bottom of that webpage they also provide a link to a downloadable pdf copy of the guidance.

Revised certificate and letter for registering vision impairment as a disability

The Department of Health and Social Care has updated the Certificate of Vision Impairment. The Referral of Vision Impairment (RVI) letter template has also been updated. The RVI is for hospital eye clinics to use before a CVI is needed, or where

the patient has declined registration, but wants advice about the difficulties caused by loss of vision.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-published-on-registering-a-vision-impairment-as-a-disability>

NHS.net email

We invite all contractors who do not currently hold an active NHS.net email account to apply for one. An NHS.net email account enables you to communicate safely and effectively with commissioners and health professionals such as CCGs, GPs and hospitals in situations such as routine or urgent referrals. As CCGs are redesigning the community services offered through optical practices, having NHS.net mail will be a requirement of inclusion in the schemes. Any sensitive information exchanged between NHS.net addresses is secure and has full information governance protection.

Please use the form at the bottom of this newsletter to apply for NHS.net

We hope you find this newsletter helpful, please let us know of anything you would like covered in a future newsletter.

Best wishes from

The Eye Care and Eye Health Contracting Team

Previous editions of these newsletters can be found at [here](#)

NHSmal account application form for Optometrists

Please complete the form below fully and email to ophthalmology.emailadmin@nhs.net

Please provide an IG toolkit completion certificate with your application (one is sufficient per practice). For further information see: <https://www.igt.hscic.gov.uk/>

Name:		Role:	
Email address:			
Organisation name and address:			
Organisation data service (ODS) code (if applicable):		Organisation telephone number:	
Optometrists – GOC registration number:			
Does your organisation already hold any NHSmal accounts? Y/N		If yes, please provide the email address(es):	
Number of individual person accounts required, preferred account name and <u>mobile number</u> for each account owner:			
Do you require a shared mailbox for your organisation? If yes, please state the preferred mailbox name (it may not be possible to use the exact name requested). Please also confirm the account owner name and mobile number:			
Reason accounts are required – what type of information will be exchanged and how frequently?			